RFK CLAN SLAMS TELEPIC

BY J. MAX ROBINS

NEW YORK — The family of Robert F. Kennedy has gone to war with the USA Network. The office of his son, Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.), issued a statement on behalf of the late senator's wife, Ethel Kennedy, and her children condemning the USA movie "Marilyn & Bobby: Her Final Affair." "Nothing that has appeared in the quarter-century since Robert Kennedy's death has been so offensive," the statement said.

The show debuts tonight (*review, page 2*). Beyond portraying Kennedy and Monroe as obsessed lovers, it speculates that Kennedy may have had the starlet murdered. The tabloid telepic has been the target of harsh reviews in TV Guide, New York

Turn to page 12

and sensationalist. But, finally, the decision of the USA Network to malign (Bobby Kennedy's) life in order to line their pockets by telecasting this 'fiction' requires a response from us.

"This lie debases the memory of our father. It denigrates the reputation of others who cannot speak for themselves. It corrupts the medium called television. The cherished memory of our father deserves better."

Kennedys decry USA telepic

Continued from page 1

magazine and elsewhere, which have attacked it for playing fast and loose with the truth.

The Kennedys have generally been silent in public about the onslaught of books, films and TV programs critical of the family. The frontal attack on "Marilyn & Bobby" veers from the family's normal strategy of exercising their influence behind the scenes.

"You have to draw the line somewhere," said Michael Powell, Rep. Kennedy's chief of staff. Powell said he has seen the telepic but that none of the Kennedy clan have screened it.

"This debases our history, our culture," Powell said. "(Prexy) Kay Koplovitz and her people at the USA Network obviously don't care a rat's ass about the truth."

Powell added that the telecast of "Marilyn & Bobby" on the heels of Monday's much ballyhooed daylong seminar on TV violence was one more example of what Rep. Kennedy viewed as an industry unable to police itself. He also said the Kennedys may sue for libel. "This trash for cash has gone too far," Powell said. "We won't tolerate people hiding behind the First Amendment to perpetuate lies."

Koplovitz was unavailable for comment, but a USA Network spokeswoman said, "('Marilyn & Bobby') is a piece of fiction and it was always labeled as one."

The telepic does carry a disclaimer, but that has done nothing to mollify the Kennedys.

"As children we learned from some in the media that we would not be accorded even a minimum of privacy," said the statement. "We have tolerated, with anguish and in silence, many previous painful TV productions and printed publications that were fraudulent